

# CONNECTICUT STATE BOARD OF HEALTH.



*Salus Populi Suprema Lex.*

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# PUBLIC HYGIENE.



"The aim of public hygiene is to arrest or prevent, by official measures, all diseases which are not, in their nature, strictly limited to the individual, but which, from external causes, or from their specific characters, have a tendency to spread throughout families, institutions, and communities, and which cannot be otherwise controlled."

Sanitary science has proved that many of the diseases which act as the principal factors in producing death, are preventable and controllable by practical hygienic measures from the neglect of which not only are many precious lives wasted every year, but many also crippled and dwarfed by disease; lucrative enterprises abandoned; hopes blasted, and poverty and want induced, if not pauperism, vice, and crime, from the distress caused by the losses resulting from unnecessary sickness and death.

It costs to be sick and more to die; and if we simply estimate the cash value of the lives wasted each year, during the productive period of life in this State, the sum would be expressed in many millions of dollars. This estimate rests upon the same basis used by the great business men of the world, the statesman and scientist, and is as reliable also in sanitary science.

Although the general principles concerning the prevention of disease have been long known and published, still the knowledge has been confined to a few, and consequently their application has been limited, and it is not until the elements of sanitary science are known and appreciated by every citizen that the desired results can be fully attained in the prevention of disease and death, the preservation of health, the prolonging of human life, and the promotion of public wealth and prosperity.

Says Disraeli, "The health of the people is really the foundation upon which all their happiness and all their power as a state depend. The health of the people is, in my opinion, therefore, the first duty of the statesman; and I am confident that there is no object of higher importance to engage the interests of society."

Great advances have been made during the last few years in sanitary science, in relation to the causes of disease and the control of epidemic, infectious, and contagious diseases. To systematically disseminate this knowledge among the people, and carry out the necessary measures extensively and throughout the State requires some public agency, and this work the State Board of Health propose to inaugurate and carry out.

The prosperity of any community, and its comparative healthfulness, are inseparably connected, and unsalubrious conditions effectually check development and growth. It is a part of our work to investigate the local conditions affecting health and longevity in the State; and here the value of registration of vital statistics becomes apparent, showing that diseases appear irregularly and with certain conditions, increasing or decreasing as these conditions vary.

The mortality returns, together with prompt returns concerning the appearance of epidemic, infectious, and contagious diseases in any locality furnish the chart to guide us in the work of prevention. Besides the great value in the work of the Board of the complete return of vital statistics we hope to secure, the legal and historic value of complete statistics is unquestionable in relation to Probate Courts, and in securing titles, in deciding questions of legitimacy, settlement, and descent, in their relations to life insurance, annuities, endowments, and in establishing the claims upon government for Pensions, etc. We therefore confidently expect all the assistance necessary in carrying on this part of our work.

The work of the State Board of Health, thus briefly sketched in some of its aspects, affecting as it does the interests of the public at large, and having for its central aim and purpose the promotion of public prosperity, and a "race of healthy, vigorous, long-lived moral human beings which sanitary administration tends to produce," can depend upon no one profession or class for support, but must enlist the sympathies and co-operation of all in dealing with interests so complex and varied. The value and power of sanitary administration has been so thoroughly tested that we appeal with the utmost confidence for that assistance and co-operation we need in forming local organizations throughout the State, and rendering of practical benefit the knowledge and powers now available in the prevention of disease and death.

In no other way can the cause of rational scientific medicine be so well advanced or medical superstitions of every form dissipated, as by teaching the people the true nature of disease, its causes and prevention. Nor can we as physicians better secure for our profession its true place and influence in the State than by working in the field opened to us by the creation of this Board. We therefore appeal especially and confidently to the physicians of the State for their aid; we desire special correspondents in every town who will report upon the public health and local sanitary affairs. All blanks necessary for correspondence will be furnished by the Secretary. Especial attention is called to the digest of registration laws and regular monthly returns to the registrars earnestly solicited. The value of vital statistics depends upon their comparative completeness and exactness, and this can only be secured by regularity and promptness in the individual returns.

By order of the Board,

C. W. CHAMBERLAIN, M. D.,

*Secretary State Board of Health.*



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